



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** A Snowflake Named Hannah – Part 2

**Guest(s):** John, Marlene & Hannah Strege

**Air Date:** January 21<sup>th</sup>, 2020

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

*NOTE: This transcript may contain minor errors and/or discrepancies from the audio. This copy may be updated.*

Announcer: Today on Family Talk.

Roger Marsh: In the book of Psalms, David praises the creator God by writing quote, "You knit me together in my mother's womb." From the very moment of conception, every life is intricately and intentionally formed by our heavenly father and even more humbling point to consider is that we are all image bearers of God himself, and that is the deeper travesty of abortion. When these innocent lives are senselessly murdered. The very reflection of God in human form is destroyed. The precious life in the womb deserves protection and we hope that you'll stand with us in that fight. Today here on Family Talk, we continue observing sanctity of human life month with the remainder of Dr. James Dobson's interview that we began on yesterday's program. His guests were John and Marlene and Hannah Strege. Back in 1999 John and Marlene became the first couple ever to adopt and implant, a frozen embryo.

Roger Marsh: Since that time, this process has been referred to as a snowflake adoption. Well, today's conversation revolves around the legal and societal response to this revolutionary idea. The Streges will address their pro-life advocacy and how they are educating people about quote-unquote snowflakes. Now their daughter, Hannah will also share the way she explains her origins to others and what she hopes to accomplish in life as the first ever snowflake baby. We begin today with Dr. Dobson and the Streges reflecting on a precious interaction they had nearly 20 years ago. It's a wonderful story. I know it's going to touch your heart.

Dr. Dobson: Hannah, you, your dad talked about the number of times that we did radio programs with you and on your story. I wonder if you remember coming to Focus on the Family. You were two years old and at that age I had you in the studio and I held you on my lap and you sang Jesus loves the little children. All the children of the world.

Hannah Strege: I do remember it. I've heard it. My mom plays it sometimes.

Dr. Dobson: You have that recording?

Marlene Strege: Yeah, I do. I do.

Dr. Dobson: How many songs can you sing?

Hannah Strege: Three?

Dr. Dobson: You got three songs. All right. Sing another one for me.

Hannah Strege: (singing)

Dr. Dobson: That is so precious. What did she say right at the end?

Marlene Strege: She whispered. I love you, Dr. Dobson.

Dr. Dobson: Oh my goodness. Isn't that incredible, and you do recall that?

Hannah Strege: I do recall it. I think that being in the broadcast studio with you is like home because it just reminds me of doing that years ago too.

Dr. Dobson: Oh, that was so exciting for me.

Marlene Strege: So that broadcast, unbeknownst to anybody aired the same day that President Bush gave his decision on federal funding for embryonic STEM cell research, August 9, 2001 and so all day long-

Dr. Dobson: Let me clarify that the reason we're so passionately opposed to embryonic STEM cell research, first of all, it doesn't work. And it's never accomplished anything. Nobody's ever been healed by that approach to research. And the other of course is at the baby dies inevitably.

Marlene Strege: Exactly.

Dr. Dobson: And so we were opposed to it. And George W. Bush got that message, he understood that, and he took a stand to be opposed to embryonic stem cell research and to oppose money for that purpose. And instead stem cell research on adult individuals has been marvelous, really successful.

Marlene Strege: It's my understanding too that adult stem cell treatments have already treated two million people and embryonic stem cell is zero. And yet our government is still funding embryonic.

Dr. Dobson: Okay. George Bush vetoed that legislation. There was a bill in Congress that would have funded this embryonic stem cell research. He vetoed it.

John Strege: Yeah. 2005 Marlene and Hannah were there at the White House and he let it be known. He was not going to fund embryonic stem cell research and the Democrats primarily and some Republicans continued to push it and it got to 2006 and they got it passed by both the House and the Senate. And he vetoed it, his first veto his presidency. Very controversial.

Dr. Dobson: But there was another president yet to come who took a different position on it. Barack Obama.

John Strege: Yes.

Dr. Dobson: Tell us that story.

Marlene Strege: So I believe he did an executive order to overturn the veto. So we have been funding embryonic stem cell since that time.

Dr. Dobson: Did you fight that one?

Marlene Strege: Hannah sent a letter to him. I believe she was 10 years old. And that's in the book as well. And it was just very, you know, ten-year-old, you know, very forthright, "Dear President Obama, I do not like how you're treating snowflakes and you need to stop."

Dr. Dobson: I said many times in that era that Barack Obama was the primary abortion president that characterized his early years from my perspective and in this one he came down in a wrong side and it is still in place today.

Marlene Strege: Yes. And so you know, with two million people being treated with adult stem cell and zero cures from embryonic stem cell research, we would just encourage Congress and our president to look at those numbers and then to look at these snowflake babies that are being born. There is a purpose for these embryos, these frozen embryos and it's to be adopted if the original family is not going to go back and get them. And you know that money could be better spent on continuing adult stem cell research as well as providing more money for the embryo adoption awareness grant that President Bush started. That has been going every year, but it's getting less and less money. But if we could get the word out, more people will understand it when we're talking to them on the street about embryo adoption and actually know what that is.

Dr. Dobson: Hannah, do you remember going to the White House?

Hannah Strege: Yes, I do.

Dr. Dobson: At the invitation of President Bush.

Hannah Strege: Yes I do. It was quite the experience for my mom and I and standing behind President Bush for his first veto was very exciting.

Dr. Dobson: You were in the photograph.

Hannah Strege: I am in the photograph. I remember wanting to go to the pool instead of sitting behind the president, but at the time I didn't realize what an honor it was and now looking back and like, wow.

Dr. Dobson: What other presidents have you written about this?

Hannah Strege: I have written President Obama, President Trump and Vice President Pence.

Dr. Dobson: Have you heard from any of them?

Hannah Strege: I've gotten a letter that was actually sent to Biola from Mike Pence responding to my letter.

Marlene Strege: They were in a press conference together in 2006 so he remembered her story and said that it still inspires him today.

Dr. Dobson: But you have not heard from the president.

Hannah Strege: I have not.

Dr. Dobson: Maybe it's time for him to hear from a lot of people like you, Hannah.

John Strege: Yes.

Marlene Strege: We would love that.

Dr. Dobson: I really believe if he knew about this, I'm pretty sure where he would come down.

Marlene Strege: Right. That would be great.

Dr. Dobson: We might take some steps to help him know about that.

John Strege: That would be fantastic.

Dr. Dobson: You just think of the young people who are out there today because of your efforts. Marlene, you brought me a little stack of photographs. Describe the twins.

Marlene Strege: Oh, this is an amazing story. So I testified before Congress in 2001 along with the second snowflake mom, Lucinda, and her and her husband had twin boys at that time.

Dr. Dobson: All these snowflakes are numbered.

Marlene Strege: Yes they are. Yes they are. So that's numbers two and three. They at that time, they were nine months old and Hannah was two I believe. At that time, politicians, scientists were saying, these embryos are in excess of clinical need. They have no purpose. They're just going to be destroyed anyway, let's do research on them. Well skip ahead to current day and we've already talked about Hannah, snowflake number one, and she wants to be a social worker and help children find forever homes through adoption. So she wants to be a social worker in adoption. Luke who snowflake number two is now a United States Marine and his twin brother Mark is in the United States Coast Guard.

Dr. Dobson: And you brought pictures of them.

Marlene Strege: And I brought pictures for you.

Dr. Dobson: And so we are putting a face on it.

Marlene Strege: Exactly. But we have snowflakes one, two and three serving God, their country, and their fellow man and we have hundreds of other snowflakes that are going to be taking their place in the world.

Dr. Dobson: Do you hear from them?

Marlene Strege: We do. We have a great support group of snowflake moms. Hannah is now starting a group just for snowflake kids so that they can all communicate.

Hannah Strege: It's in the process of being started right now.

Marlene Strege: Yes, right.

Dr. Dobson: John, you proud of these ladies?

John Strege: Unbelievably so. Yeah. I'm a very fortunate man.

Dr. Dobson: What conclusion did you draw in your book? How does it end?

John Strege: You know, I tried to make it evident that it's not just our story, that it's all of these frozen embryos, these snowflake babies, it's all their stories too. And collectively they're all going to grow up and help make the world a better place. It's not just about Hannah, Marlene and me, it's about the whole movement. It's a prolife movement of a different sort.

Dr. Dobson: Does your heart grieved for a million babies?

John Strege: It does.

Dr. Dobson: Frozen and-

John Strege: Yeah, and just waiting for a chance.

Dr. Dobson: I wonder if there aren't people listening to us right now who are wishing that they could take advantage of this opportunity. Talk to them, Marlene. Especially the young women.

Marlene Strege: Exactly. I certainly would encourage you to look into snowflakes, snowflakes.org as well as families that have remaining embryos and you just don't know what to do with them and you know that those are your children's siblings. And I really think you need to make a plan for them and look into adoption. And I think you would be very, very pleasantly surprised at some of the options and some of the, you know, you're not just going to be maybe giving them to a family and never knowing what happens. You would have an open adoption so you would know exactly what's happening to those children, those and the women and couples who are just yearning for a child and want to have a baby. This might really work for you.

Dr. Dobson: It has for many other women.

Marlene Strege: It has. I wanted to come back to the point though about the other snowflakes that I brought pictures of. So many of these kids now, they're going off to college. So we have Tanner who's number eight, who's at Grand Canyon and his mom says he's getting straight As and he's an accounting major. We have identical twins, Sam and Ben who are now freshman at Oklahoma State and some younger ones. The Gilly girls are just phenomenal. They are singers. They've been called musical prodigies, so it's snowflake number 39 and 40 and they're twin sisters, 100, and 101, so two sets of twin girls. And they sing country and gospel and they have CDs and they do tours.

Dr. Dobson: How can people get in touch with them?

Marlene Strege: They can go on GillyGirls.us and look up their website and hear their music.

Dr. Dobson: They do, they travel?

Marlene Strege: They do travel.

Dr. Dobson: And sing.

Marlene Strege: And sing. Yup, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Dobson: Hannah, let's talk some more about you. You're in your third year at Biola.

Hannah Strege: Yes, sir.

Dr. Dobson: And you're majoring in sociology.

Hannah Strege: Yes.

Dr. Dobson: And what do you plan to do with it?

Hannah Strege: So I'm majoring in sociology with an emphasis in social work and I plan to pursue my master's degree in social work as well. This issue is a social issue. So social work seems quite appropriate for what I plan to do with my life. I do have three main goals, whether they be outside of myself or not. They are way above me and in the hands of God. But being an advocate for the prolife movement, reformation of the IVF industry, as well as getting all the embryos adopted and finding forever homes and a chance at life.

Dr. Dobson: So you see this as the work of the Lord.

Hannah Strege: Yes.

Dr. Dobson: And he's got a plan for you you won't believe.

Hannah Strege: Not just me, but all of those embryos.

Marlene Strege: You know in the book Hannah talks about in the forward we had 20 embryos and we'd watched a movie Heaven is for Real and it touched Hannah and she said, "We need to name my siblings the 19 that didn't survive." So the three of us, we took three months and the rule was that we all had to agree on the name. And so she included all 19 names of her siblings.

Hannah Strege: And you're going to see them again.

Marlene Strege: Exactly. And she said, "You know, I'm doing it for them because"-

Dr. Dobson: That's so neat. Hannah, was that your idea?

Hannah Strege: Yeah. This life isn't for me. It's for God. So whatever work I can be doing on earth to further his kingdom is God's work.

Dr. Dobson: You know how fortunate you are to be alive, don't you?

Hannah Strege: Yes I do.

Dr. Dobson: God knew you before you were born. Before foundations of the universe, he knew you.

Hannah Strege: Jeremiah 1:5.

Dr. Dobson: Marlene, did you ever grieve for those babies that didn't survive? They didn't make it.

Marlene Strege: Yes. Yes.

Dr. Dobson: So are they like children to you?

Marlene Strege: Yes. The first transfer, they had thaw 12 and only three survived. And I remember going for my appointment and you have this just grief at the same time of expectation because you know that three survived. So there's still hope that you might get pregnant. Well then I didn't get pregnant-

Dr. Dobson: Were you very devastated?

Marlene Strege: Devastated because I thought, I thought this was God's plan and how could I have been wrong? And you know, because I'm not pregnant, but I said I just want to go the very next month. And so you know, all of this is timed with your cycle and they have to start thawing the embryo at the same time my uterine lining is at this precise place where those embryos would be so that they would implant. It's just amazing.

Dr. Dobson: It's quite a science.

Marlene Strege: It's quite a science. So it's not like we just picked a day. So Hannah was actually thawed on Good Friday and transferred the day before Easter. So when we as Christians celebrate new life is when Hannah came back to life. And so I remember when they transferred her and they said, "Oh, two out of three look really good." So, you know, I thought I was going to get pregnant with twins.

Dr. Dobson: Would that have been okay with you?

Marlene Strege: That would have been fine too. And then when they did the ultrasound and then, you know, it showed that one baby. But I just remember being elated and grieving at the same time. And I just remember that was just such a odd place to be in when, how can you be so elated and so heartbroken at the same time?

Dr. Dobson: That is the back story to this entire situation is, it's your love for life, your love for these babies that God has created and they are indeed human when they are fertilized and the embryo is a human being.

Marlene Strege: Right, right. And I also remember the time when I kept thinking, you know, Oh I want to get pregnant, I want to get pregnant. And then, then I had this thought, I'm like, "Oh my goodness, my broken body is saving a life." My body was broken because I had infertility, but I was actually saving a life. And I thought, it's not about me. It's about the baby.

Dr. Dobson: John, do you feel that too?

John Strege: Absolutely. Yes.



Dr. Dobson: Did you ever have feelings of disappointment because you couldn't be a father?

John Strege: Oh, absolutely. Yeah. I mean, we'd been planning it for quite a while and, but again, women want to be pregnant and experience pregnancy. I would have been-

Dr. Dobson: That's unique.

John Strege: Yeah, before she threw that out as an option to can we adopt frozen embryos? I had started thinking, well, we'll go through traditional adoption or-

Marlene Strege: And you know, what we discovered through that is we're not in love with our egg and our sperm. We're in love with the child. And it didn't matter. It doesn't matter that she's not genetically related to us at all because she's our child. She's just our child, you know?

Dr. Dobson: We feel that way about Ryan.

Marlene Strege: Right. And that's what I want like women and couples to understand about adoption. It opened up a whole new world to us that we wouldn't miss for anything. Having been through this and, and new friendships and the new families, you know, it's been a great ride and I always say, if you stick with God watch out for the wildest ride of your life.

Dr. Dobson: Do your professors know about this? Have they talked to you about it?

Hannah Strege: I try to talk about my story as openly as possible, whether that's incorporating it into essays or conversation or visiting with office hours with my professors and just talking to them and letting them know this is an option and letting them know this is my story and how I intend to use it. It's been such a gift.

Dr. Dobson: Do any of your classmates know about it?

Hannah Strege: It's not something I vocalize right when I meet somebody, but certainly after we've known each other a little while, I'll get to it.

Dr. Dobson: Do they understand it?

Hannah Strege: I think they understand it better than some adults for sure.

Marlene Strege: She's had a couple of funny things happen at Biola. One of them was when she was taking her ethics class and one of the topics she said, I can't wait till they get to the embryonic stem cell research one. So the professors talking about embryonic stem cell and at the very end of the class the professor says, "And you know, these frozen embryos can be adopted now."

Dr. Dobson: He didn't know he had a student.

Marlene Strege: She knows now that Hannah went up and talked to her afterwards and then she'd have friends and they'd say, "Hey Hannah, we just talked about you in our psychology class today." So this is really coming into academia. We just hosted two girls from the University of Copenhagen who's doing their master's thesis in embryo adoption. And they heard about it from their medical anthropology class. So they came to the States to interview snowflake families. And what they found was that faith was a integral part of so many of the snowflakes' stories that they're now incorporating that into their research studies.

Dr. Dobson: Is that right?

Marlene Strege: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So we've been studied, we've had anthropologists come to our home from Canada. We've had social work studies from England as well as psychology studies from England. So it's just a topic that's being studied by so many different areas.

Dr. Dobson: Marlene, talk to the women out there who are infertile. That is a very painful experience in life, isn't it? When I talked to you, that's what I remember most. That you desperately, I used that word desperately wanted to be a mother.

Marlene Strege: Yes. And, and so with our particular diagnosis too, of premature ovarian failure, it meant something different for me than it did for John. Because for me it meant that I was not going to be able to carry a child or have that experience. I'd never feel a baby's kick or nurse a child. And all of those things that I wanted to do, I wanted to have, you know, buy the maternity clothes and do all of that. So it was devastating that I wasn't going to be able to do that. And then with the idea of embryo adoption, not only was I saving a life, I was going to be able to experience that. And this is such a woman's issue. That's another thing that's under the radar that nobody talks about this as a women's issue. But every woman, every snowflake mom that I come in contact with, this has resonated with them, that they were able to carry their child, that they were able to affect their child while it was growing in them, and with what they eat and that type of thing.

Dr. Dobson: Well tell them again how they can get more information about this.

Marlene Strege: Go onto snowflakes.org. Night Light now has 10 locations in 10 different states and contact them and they have information and they would love to connect with you and walk you through this. If you need to talk to a snowflake mom who's gone through this, they can connect you with a snowflake mom and walk you through this because you know you don't have to be alone in this. You've got all of us other moms who've gone through this already.

Dr. Dobson: You know we adopted Ryan through the Evangelical Welfare Agency in Whittier, California and I will always appreciate them and love them for how they handled everything. A woman named Mrs. House was the social worker who worked with us. They now have become Night Light, it's the same organization.

Marlene Strege: It's the same group, Night Light Christian Adoptions. They've been in business for 60 years. I kind of think they know what they're doing. They also have international, they have domestic and they have foster adoption. And that's another thing to bring up because sometimes families start in one program and for whatever reason, maybe a birth mom changes her mind or a country shuts down or whatever. But you can switch programs. So you might start out in one and then end up in another, but once you're holding your child from whatever program you are in, you say, "Yes, this is how it was supposed to be."

Hannah Strege: Yeah, we often forget about our story because my mom is both my adopted mom and my birth mom. It doesn't even seem that it's any different and I don't know any different either. So this is just my life and this is how I've been living it. So this is normal for me.

Marlene Strege: It's really a celebration when we get together with other snowflake parents. It's a celebration.

Hannah Strege: Celebration of life.

Dr. Dobson: Hannah, I have had a special love for you since you were born. I have kind of felt like I'm your godfather and to have you come here today and talk about it. You're a college student and you love the Lord. And you've got a purpose and plan in life. And to see it from beginning to this point is really meaningful to me. I appreciate your being with us and appreciate your being willing to open people to this aspect of your private life.

Hannah Strege: Yeah, thank you Dr. It's a privilege to call you my godfather as well and you've always been in a special place in all of our hearts.

Dr. Dobson: John, any last thing?

John Strege: I echo that entirely. It's, this is God's story. I mean we just kind of went along with it. God had his plan for us, but you were part of that plan too, so we thank you.

Marlene Strege: Well we certainly think of you as Hannah's godfather and we have over all these years and we're very proud to say that to people that we meet. And again, I don't know if I ever thanked you for answering that letter and calling me, but thank you so, so much.

Dr. Dobson: That's its own reward.

Marlene Strege: Oh my goodness. Yeah. Wow. So thank you.

Dr. Dobson: Well, we will continue to stay in touch and we will do updates from time to time.

Hannah Strege: Perfect.

Dr. Dobson: When you get through with your master's degree, you come back and tell us about it.

Hannah Strege: Sounds good.

Dr. Dobson: Okay. Blessings to you all. I bring greetings to you from Shirley and God be with you.

John Strege: Thank you.

Hannah Strege: Thank you.

Marlene Strege: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, what an important discussion we've been listening to over the past couple of days here on Family Talk. Dr. James Dobson's guests have been John, Marlene and Hannah Strege. You can learn more about their story and also Night Light Christian Adoptions by visiting our broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and then tap on the broadcast icon at the top of the page. Well, that's all the time we have for today. Tomorrow we continue to honor the sanctity of human life month through Dr. Dobson's interview with Dr. William Lile. He is an outspoken, pro-life OB/GYN who fervently fights for the life of the preborn. You'll learn more about his story on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for joining us today.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Tim Clinton: Hi everyone. This is Dr. Tim Clinton, executive director of the James Dobson Family Institute. Our ministry here exists to honor the Lord through ministering to today's families and marriages all over the world. And as the JDFI, the James Dobson Family Institute continues to grow. We need your help. Visit us, will you do that? At [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) or call us toll free at (877) 732-6825. Stand with us and fight for righteousness and culture.